

Vision

The Vision for the City is simply stated – “Renton – The center of opportunity in the Puget Sound Region where businesses and families thrive.” These few words are intended to provide a representation of how the City views itself at the present time and into the future. The words communicate both truths about and hopes for the City of Renton.

The Vision words stand for much more –

- A community that is healthy and safe, that has cohesive, well-established neighborhoods and a growing diversity of housing to match the diversity of the population with its various needs and wants
- A working town with a full spectrum of employment opportunities for all economic segments, regardless of education, age, gender, or ethnic origin
- A regional center for active and passive recreation that features access for all to a healthy river, a clean lake, and clear mountain views to enhance the experience

Renton has a city government, business community, and citizens infused with a passionate belief that it is the best place to be. They also have the will, desire, and resources to nurture the qualities that make it that and to make it even better in the future. That is the Vision.

The Renton Mission states, unequivocally, the responsibility of the City, “in partnership and communication with residents, businesses, and schools” to take the steps necessary to fulfill the Vision. These include:

- Promoting citywide economic development
- Promoting neighborhood revitalization
- Managing growth through sound urban planning
- Meeting service demands that contribute to the livability of the community
- Influencing decisions that impact the City.

The Business Plan Goals, with the Vision and Mission, form the basis for City objectives and policies. The Goals are adopted annually by the City Council. Each year objectives and implementing policies of the Comprehensive Plan are checked against current goals and objectives. The resulting adjustments are formed into annual amendments to the Comprehensive Plan.

Starting in 2009, the City will initiate a Community Planning process, where each area of the City will be divided geographically into Community Planning Areas. Residents, businesses, and stakeholders will develop a vision that defines their community and forms the basis for a set of policies that address issues of growth, quality of life, design, and capital improvements. Community Plans will be an extension of the Comprehensive Plan, and a realization of the Vision, Mission, and Goals of the Council’s Business Plan.

Current policies of the Comprehensive Plan direct future growth to the Urban Center, the core of an economically healthy, working city, and to mixed-use areas created outside of the downtown. Although densities of development are based on user preference and market factors, policies encourage maximum land efficiency, even outside the Urban Center, and strive for development that is more intense than typical “suburban” prototypes.

Ideally, the mixed-use areas will result in a reduction of transportation impacts within the City by allowing residents to work and shop close to where they live, in both new and well-established neighborhoods, thereby providing alternatives to single-occupant vehicles, and maintaining a balance between parking supply and demand.

To further the goal of a balance between single- and multi-family housing, there is an objective to increase the supply of single-family housing through infill development. Some of this single-family infill will occur in newly annexed areas of the City, as a way to meet the desired single/multi-family housing mix and provide efficient urban services. There is, however, a corresponding objective to restrict expansion of traditional multi-family housing in outlying areas and channel mixed-use/multi-family into the downtown, South Lake Washington, and the Highlands. By this means, sufficient land capacity to accommodate future growth, including Renton’s share of projected regional housing needs, will be ensured while maintaining the quality of life in both new and established neighborhoods.

A significant characteristic of the neighborhoods of Renton is their multi-level diversity. Most neighborhoods include households that vary from one another in age range or generation, economic level, and place of origin or nationality. In order to respect and protect this quality, the City must allow for a full range of housing types to accommodate the diverse population, from larger, “move up” homes to smaller scale single-family, multi-family, and condominium developments, as well as to traditional single-family houses.

A goal is to enhance the present character of the City and improve the quality of life. This must be done on several levels. On a community level, City policies support activities that strengthen neighborhood cohesiveness. The energy of a neighborhood that strives for a greater “sense of community” by meeting and working together can lead to amenities that make the area more attractive or improve its function as a neighborhood center.

On a project level, a high standard of design is a function of development standards. On the broadest level, the City policies ensure that urbanization, economic development, and natural area protection are balanced.

The unique setting of the City of Renton was recognized as “advantageous” from its earliest days. Its situation on the shore of Lake Washington, its hilltop views of the expanses of the lake, Mt. Rainier, the Cascades and Olympic Mountains, tree shrouded slopes, natural wildlife corridors, valley neighborhoods, and the clear water of the Cedar River and the many creeks and streams that run through the City are deeply appreciated by its residents. There is an abiding commitment to protect, restore, and enhance environmental quality within the City. Likewise,

there is a desire to ensure quality parks and adequate open space within this environment to meet the recreational needs of residents.

It is understood that, with other factors, the quality of the environment is dependent on the reliability and efficiency of existing utility systems, in order to protect the public health and safety and minimize impacts. High levels of service are maintained, while the cost of implementation is shared in an equitable manner.

Basic to Renton's Vision is the concept that urban living provides both choice and balanced opportunities for residents; employment and housing, recreation and religion, goods and services, all available in the community.

To foster the balance of urban rather than suburban development patterns, the City will encourage higher density mixed-use development in selected areas of the Commercial Corridor designation. These selected areas are to function as living / working / entertainment nodes for the smaller community areas of the City they are within.

To this end, the City has a responsibility to ensure availability of adequate land capacity so that both the employment and economic base can be expanded and diversified. Policies encourage expansion of development in the Valley and redevelopment within the Urban Center to broaden the City's employment and economic base.

Fundamental to the Vision is a revitalized Downtown Core, within the Urban Center, that functions as a living / working / entertainment area for both the community as a whole and for a "24 hour Downtown population." The City will continue to work to bring a balance of uses, consisting of retail and other commercial, office, light industrial, and residential into the Downtown.

Redevelopment of the south Lake Washington area, within the "Urban Center – North," will contribute to the renewed vitality of the Downtown Core. The Urban Center-North, used for heavy industrial manufacturing and associated parking for more than 60 years, offers the potential for an expanded Urban Center that will become a regional focus.

The City of Renton's Vision is ambitious and far-sighted. It is the underlying structure for policies that strengthen the character of a City that entered its second century with renewed energy, ready to capitalize on fresh opportunities.